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Solar Energy Company and Commonwealth Edison Team Up to Create a Sustainable 'Solar Economy' Here in Illinois

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STELLE, Ill., May 1, 2000 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- This summer, Illinois homeowners can reduce their electric bills, though the new Solar Connect Illinois program, which gives ComEd customers savings on solar energy equipment. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs (DCCA) also is offering grants and rebates for equipment purchases through its Renewable Energy Resources Program.

The new program from SunWize Technologies, Inc., a New York-based solar energy firm, features a variety of systems for the home -- including the low-maintenance Earth Safe(TM) pre-engineered solar energy kit from Siemens Solar Industries, the world's leading manufacturer of solar photovoltaic modules and cells.

When used with an optional battery bank, solar electric systems quietly provide an automatic, reliable source of backup energy, during an unexpected power outage. Under another program, ComEd's new Wind & Photovoltaic Generation Pricing Experiment, some of the systems even enable homeowners to potentially sell power to the utility company. The Solar Connect Illinois is a five-year program, which coincides with ComEd's Wind & Photovoltaic Generation Pricing Experiment.

"These systems bring new value to the marketplace, because we have pre-engineered the systems to fit real world environments," said Siemens' Chief Operating Officer, Chet Ferris. "In the past, solar electric systems were uniquely designed for specific installations. This naturally increased installation costs. With Earth Safe(TM) kits, electrical contractors can profitably sell and develop new installations."

At the heart of the Solar Connect Illinois program is a thrust to build a solar sales infrastructure here, by making the equipment more affordable for consumers and more profitable for electrical contractors. Currently, SunWize Technologies has only a handful of dealers here in Illinois. The

program provides incentives for more dealers to distribute and electrical contractors to install solar systems. With a formal program kick-off scheduled for June 21, new dealers and installers are being trained to meet the inspection requirements of both ComEd and the DCCA, which is administering the program.

"Right now, we have more interest among homeowners than we have qualified electrical contractors and other dealers to actually sell and install the systems," said David Martindale, Solar Connect Illinois program manager. "Therefore, this program is more about creating an entire infrastructure of solar dealers, installers and customers than simply selling solar systems."

To request a Solar Connect Illinois information package, contact David Martindale at 1-800-817-6527, ext. 132 or e-mail: dmartindale@besicorp.com. Faxed requests should be sent to: 1-914-336-0457. Or write: SunWize Technologies, Inc., Solar Connect Illinois, #1 Sun Street, Stelle IL 60919. The packages include details of the program, the Clean Power Estimator web site, tax credits, low interest rate financing options and a list of qualified SunWize dealers and installers in the ComEd service area.

For more information and enrollment materials for ComEd's Wind and Photovoltaic Generation Pricing Experiment, contact program manager Denise Bechen by phone at 1-630-684-3784, fax: 1-630-684-3719, e-mail: denise.a.bechen@ucm.com.

Her mailing address is Commonwealth Edison, Technical Services, 1919 Swift Drive, Oak Brook IL 60523.

SunWize Technologies, Inc., a Besicorp company, is a New York-based solar technology company specializing in the development and manufacturing of solar electric products and systems, as well as component distribution.

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